

A
DISCOURSE
UPON THE
NATURE
OF
Eternitie,

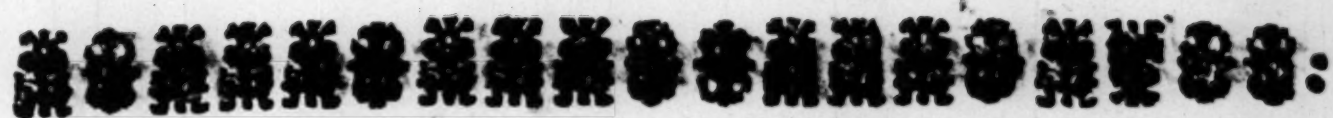
And the Condition of a separated Soule,
according to the grounds of Reason,
and Principles of Christian
RELIGION.

*Lib: Tho: Barlow ex dono Aubroni (gal
nollem, Pontificij, alias) Amicissimi.*
By WILLIAM BRENT of *Graves Inn*,
Esquire, (now Prisoner in the
Gate-House.) and a Papist

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The Preface to the Reader.



Mpedocles of Agrigentum being demanded why twas so hard to finde out a wise man, gave this reason ; because (said he) none can finde one out , who is not so himselfe ; therby inferring , that unlesse there bee a proportion betweene the object and the power , it will never bee able to produce the effects flowing from it.

Upon this ground it may be well concluded , that t'is impossible for any to give a true description of Eternity, who hath no subsistence but in time ; and certainly , although some spirits sublima-

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ted by the dayly contemplation of Eternall things ; may perhaps bee able to shew us some imperfect Ideas , of those perfect beauties whereon they are enamoured , yet t'is a meere extravagance in mee who have imployed the best part of my time in quest of transitory and fading things , to undertake the handling of a subject which cannot bee worthily expressed by lesse then an Angell, nor be conceived in this life by human kind.

Whilest Hannibal was with the King Antiochus in Ephesus, where they were busied in making preparation for a war against the Romans, he was invited by some of the great Kings favourites to beare one Phormio a Philosopher read a Lecture of military discipline, and the duty of a Generall, and having performed

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formed it with the applause of all the auditory, HANNIBALL being demanded his opinion of the man, answered that he had indeed formerly seen divers mad men, but never any one so mad as PHORMIO, who having never viewed troopes on their march, never spent one night in the trenches, or performed the least duty of a Souldier, would notwithstanding take upon himselfe to order an Army & prescribe rules unto a General.

It is certainly much easier to comprehend all military knowledge which is contained in the finite number of some precepts drawne from reason and experience; then fathom the bottemless Abyss of Eternity, which holds no proportion at all with the narrow limits and shallownesse of humane reason; and consequently

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quently to undertake the handling of this subject is a much greater madnesse then that of PHORMIO.

This being so, I doubt not but there will be some, who unsatisfied with what I shall set down, will question upon what grounds I have ad-ventured to publish my conceptions upon Eternity, so many excellent penes having already imploied themselves in the deciphering of it.) and will conclude, that as his errour is to bee pittied, who contrary to his expectation, (failes) by the weaknesse of his forces to performe what hee hath undertaken; so his madnesse is unexcusable, who undertakes what himselfe knowes, is not to bee performed.

I will not goe about to justifie my selfe
against

to the Reader.

against their reprehensions, which perhaps have truth for their foundation; all I shall say is, I have written this onely for my owne private use, that I might at times of leisure view the discoveries I have made of that Countrey to which I tend; and on which time at the shutting in of my lives course will land me, and I have published it not as conceiving I could better what hath formerly been written, but out of an opinion, that my conceits (though short of what others have delivered) might hit the humor of some one or other, and waken him from that lethargie wherein the World holds the most part of men during their lives, that he might look about in time and provide himselfe for that Eternall habitation; those who are stung with the Tarantula

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tula, cannot be cured but by Musick, and I have heard that it is not alwayes the best Tunes help the diseased Patients, but such as (how extravagant soever) sympathize most with their inclinations.

Reader ! having given thee this account of my selfe, I proceed briefly to set down the substance of this short Treatise: in the first place, I shall endeavour to let thee know what Eternity is ; in the second, to describe what our condition will bee in it : & in the last place, to set down such Rules as may (being observed) render us perfectly happy in that fixed condition , wherein Eternity will place us : all I require from thee is , that if thou approve not what I write, thou wilt (at least) approve the good will wherewith tis written.

Farewell.



A Discourse upon the Nature of Eternity &c.



One of the Maximes wherein Philosophers (notwithstanding the many different opinions among them) doe accord is this; *Nihil est in*

intellectu, quod non prius fuit in sensu; that is, nothing is in our understanding which hath not first gained it's admittance through the senses; our soules during the time of their imprisonment in our bodies, seeme to bee so narrowly coopt up by our senses who guard all the avenues, by which any intelligence of the great workmanships of nature may be conveyed to them; that they get notice of nothing, save what is brought them by their mediation.

Well may the exterior objects assisted by the Sunns light fill the aire with
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the representation of their severall species, but the understanding will not be able to know any thing either of the shape or colour, unless they pass through the eye into the common sense, and be transmitted to the fancy.

The warbling Choristers of the aire, may wel cause both the woods & vallies, eccho, with their melodious soundes; and all the famous Orators display the utmost charmes of winning Rhetoricke: but if our eares deny them entrance to the braine, they will at last die in the aire where they were formed, without giving us the last information, either of their harmony, or meaning.

All the rare spices of the East may well evaporate themselves to nothing before our eyes, without leaving any other sense of their rich perfumes, but what our smelling shall convey unto us. And if another Monarck farr surpassing *Assuerus* in the riches, and extent of his Dominions, should unpeople the three Elements, to furnish out a sumptuous feast that might

might shew forth the greatnesse of his magnificence, wee were not able to distinguish any of those exquisite dainties, and delicious wines; farther then what our tastes should dictate unto us.

In fine, our Soules, notwithstanding their immateriall substance, and the faculties of will and understanding, whereby they thinke themselves equall to the Celestiall Spirits (were but those gates dammed up whereof our senses are the Porters) would (like the Ægyptians during the three daies dar enesse where-with God plagued them) bee forced to sit stil, nor could the Heavenly gifts of reasoning and resolving availe them ought towards the discovery of truth or goodnesse, which are the onely object of their functions.

The spots wee now discover in the Sunn, the vallies in the Moon, and Starrs that moove in an Epicycle about the Planet *Jupiter*; had been Eternally concealed from all man-kinde, had not the invention of *Galileu* perspectives by ai-

the weaknesse of our sight, discovered them unto our eyes and I am verily perswaded that all those rare effects of nature which wee now attribute to sympathy, to antipathy, or other occult causes, are indeed onely materiall quallities, but too subtile to bee perceived by our senses, which is the cause that all our rarest wits are at a fault in quest of them, and pay us onely with obscure termes instead of truth.

Eternity alone is that can never fall to bee the object of our senses; the infinity of it's duration cannot be comprehended by their finite powers, and time doth hurrie us away so fast over the race of our mortallity, that we have not the leasure to contemplate its stable firmnesse, nor subject to those lawes of ruine by which heaven and earth shall one day perish. This truth is excellently confirmed unto us by the Apostle, when hee saith that neither eye hath seene, eare heard, nor hath it entred into the heart of man, to conceive the excellencies of
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what God hath prepared in store for those that feare him. Eternity is surely one of the most precious of all those blessings, and the Trisagion or thrice holy, so much renowned in the Greeke Church, as a Hymne delivered to them by the mouthes of Angells, *Sanctus Deus, sanctus fortis, Sanctus immortalis*, puts immortality in the last place, as complement of the Divine perfections.

When *Moses* mooved with a holy curiosity, desired hee might behold the face of God, he was answered it was impossible to see that and live; all this beloved Patriarch could obtaine, was licence to view the glory of his hinder parts in passing by; and what is thereby meant save onely this; that wee may be permitted here on Earth, to contemplate the Divine perfections in the Creatures, which are the least, and meanest effects of his power, being produced during the continuance of fleeting time, but that all solid joyes, together with his beatificall vision, are reserved onely for such as fix

their habitations in the blest dwelling of Eternity.

Saint Paul being through speciall favour wrapt into the third Heaven that hee might take a tast of those Celestiall pleasures, thinkes it not lawfull to utter the *Arcana*, that is, the sublime, and hidden things which hee learned there; the greatest height we can attaine unto whilst wee are heere, is to contemplate the mysteries which shall be there revealed, *per speculum in enigmate*, through a glasse, in a darke riddle: what is this glasse, but faith, by whose assistance our faint eyes are able without dazeling, to looke upon the Sunn of truth, even God himselfe, and expound those riddles that passe the reach of humane understanding?

Relying therefore upon this guide, I shall begin to search into the Nature of Eternity, because her Maxims, are like a clew of thread let downe from Heaven to lead us with security, and humblenesse into the understanding of Divine mysteries; that so wee may not stray in the
wild

wild maze of selfe opinion, wherein the greatest part of humane kinde do wander endlessly, and lose themselves, at last being intrapped in the pernicious snares, of overweaning pride, or stupid ignorance.

When the Divines endeavour to describe the Deity unto us, they make us of three sorts of Attributes: the first, as they call them negative, the second relative, and the third positive: the first, shew what hee is not, and the second what hee is in relation to us, or to some other being, but the third which should declare unto us, what hee is in himselfe, faile to performe it, because all termes Explicate onely our conceptions, and wee can conceive nothing but what is infinitely short of his perfections: they call him increa- ted and immortall, that wee may know his essence is incompatible, with whatsoever hath either ending or beginning; they terme him Creator and Redeemer,

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thereby informing us that all the blessings we enjoy here or expect heereafter are but dependancies upon his power. But when they tell us of his vertues, and of his wisdom, they intend not that we should thereby understand such vertues or such wisdom as are in us; not an affection, or habit of his will inclining him to pursue alwayes the dictates of a right reason, nor a perspicacity of judgement enabling him to distinguish upon all occasions the real truths, from those that seeme so; which notwithstanding is the proper meaning of those tearmes, whereas the Divine vertues, and wisdom are neither qualities, nor habits, but the very essence and being of God himselfe, which cannot bee knowne or comprehended by any other nature inferior to him.

It being therefore admitted that wee can never write or conceive any thing worthily of the Divine Nature, how is it possible, I should bee able to explicate the Nature of Eternity, which is the measure

sure of his duration, and one of the most excellent of all his attributes? God himself seems to glory in it when being asked his name by the great Patriarch *Moses* he gives him only this description of himself, *Ego sum qui sum*. I am he that am, without mentioning either his power, his justice, or any of his other attributes, giving us thereby to understand that all his other attributes depend upon his being (according to the order of our conceptions) as their foundation; that other things have an existence whose beginning flows from his power, and whose continuance is an effect only of his will; that nothing hath a stable independant being save onely he, and that in fine, no happiness or perfection is to be prized, if the enjoyment of it be not secured unto us by Eternity.

This measure of Gods being, cannot (by any positive terms which wee can use) be comprehended, or defined, nor can it be illustrated to humane understandings, by other means then by considering the nature of it negatively, and comparatively,

comparatively, unto those things which have a being during the continuance of time, the first of which considerations shall be of the infinity thereof; which (as I said before) is a terme purely negative, and represents nothing at all unto our imaginations, the only conception we can frame upon it; being of something, not circumscribed by ends, or bounds, as are all the objects which present themselves unto our senses.

We are astonished when we consider the vast extent of this habitable earth which hath sufficed to the production and nourishment of the innumerable number of men now living, or that have had a being since the Creation of the World, and we are notwithstanding satisfied both by the demonstrations of Cosmographers, and relations of Navigators, that a full third part of it is yet undiscovered. The immense quantity of waters in the Ocean, seemes to pose Arithmetick, to number all the severall drops of water contained in it: but above all the
Heavens

Heavens incircling round this ball made up of Earth, Water, and the other Elements, and exceeding it so far in bignesse, that all of it together beares in comparison to them but such proportion (according to the Astronomers computation) as a point in middle of a circle, to the circumference, doth with its unmeasurable greatnesse out vie the force of humane understanding, to conceive any *idea* of its dimensions; and yet when wee consider, but with the least attention these great workemanships of God, and search into the nature of them, wee must needs be satisfied they are not infinite; for that consisting (as our senses can informe us) of finite parts; themselves must likewise bee of the same nature with the parts whereof they are composed: who is it that perceives not when hee takes up a shovell full of earth from the ground, or but a dish of water out of the Sea, that those portions of the two Elements are finite, and that our not being able to find out their certaine quantity, proceeds not from

from any contradiction in their natures, to bee surveyd or measured, but onely from the weaknesse of our forces? who is it that can doubt when hee perceives the Sunne draw neerer to us but that the distance betweene us and him is finite? since were it otherwise, it were not capable of increase or diminution. And who in fine can make a question but that the Heavens are circumscribed by certaine bounds, and limits, when hee beholds them to bee perpetually measured by the Sunn, Moone, and the other Planets in their severall motions, according to whose different races, wee give beginning and ending, unto our houres, dayes, months, years, and to our ages.

Archimedes was of opinion hee could have mooved the world, had there been any other place out of it, upon which he might have fixed his instrument; and I am certainly perswaded that when wee shall bee freed out of this cage of earth wherein our soules are inclosed during this life; wee shall with ease bee able to
surveigh

surveigh and comprehend, the Heavens, the Earth, and all the other workmanship of nature that now appeare to bee so far beyond the reach of humane understanding. And yet when our enlarged soules shall have the power to circle earth, sound hell, and measure all the vast extent of Heaven, how little or rather nothing at all will that appeare, being compared unto infinity? if wee were able to number all the droppes of water in the Sea, and count the sands upon the shore, and if for every one of them wee were to live an age before wee died, yet were this terme as nothing being compared unto Eternity, since time would at last consume all that large stocke of our subsistence, and Eternity when that were past would still continue constant in the full possession of all its being.

Aristotle was of opinion the world wherein wee live had no beginning, and should never have an ending, perswaded thereunto by the incessant vicissitude of generation, and corruption, and the settled

led course of Nature which perpetuates all the severall species, or kinds of things, notwithstanding the continuall decay of the individualls, whereof they are composed; if this imagination of his were true, it would then follow, that the duration of the world, should bee indeed perpetuall, but not infinite, and that it would have nothing in it approaching to the pure simplicity of an Eternall being. For if time be divided (as reason, experience, and the opinion of all Philosophers, assure us tis) into past, present, and to come, how can that (though nere so farr extended) bee without end? whose very being consists in a perpetuall fluxe of ending and beginning; or how can that bee without bounds? whose two parts, that is, the first and last, are not at all; and whose third part (wherein onely it subsists) is circumscribed within such narrow limits, that we can hardly think a thought, during the terme of its duration: and what resemblance can there bee in it of Eternity; the one being in a continuall

tinuall motion, and the other in a constant quiet; the one perpetually changing, and the other never subject to alteration, and the one in fine subsisting onely in the short instants of the present time, whereas the other comprehends all times past, present, and to come, in the pure simplicity of a present being. From this ground, there ariseth another consideration of the Nature of Eternity, that is of the indivisibility thereof, which I make the subject of my next reflection.

Indivisibility is a terme also negative, which represents unto us onely something that cannot bee parcelled out by portions as the things of this inferiour world way bee. *Divide, et impera*, that is divide and governe, is a maxime successfully practised by the Politicians, when making use of the private dissensions either of a City, or Commonwealth, they obtaine and preserve thereby their Dominion over all the differing parties: and we may also, with the same truth

truth affirme this other, *Divide & destroy*; divide and destroy; God who is Creator of whatsoever hath an existence, being himselfe one by the simplicity of his Nature, hath placed the subsistence of all things in unity; and hath therefore by a working peculiar onely to himselfe; united the contraries of heat and cold, of draught and moisture; unto the making up of all the severall bodies, either sensible or insensible; which are contained in the rich treasury of nature; whilest they continue united by this bond, so long they are said to bee; but if the union bee once broken, either by externall violence, or the inward working of the different qualities whereof the body is composed; then doth it forthwith lose the former being, and becomes some other thing, according to the nature of the new form which it acquires. As long as our bodies remaine fit to entertaine our soules, by the due temperature of the humors, and disposition of the Organs to receive her operations, wee continue to bee men; but

but when that ceaseth either by inward distemper or outward force, wee then leave to be so; our soules becomming separated formes, and our bodies returning to the common masse of matter, from whence they are extracted; the same wee see happens in beasts, plants, and in all other inanimate bodies, of what Nature or quality soever: so as there can bee no conclusion truer then this, that whatsoever is already divided, hath left to bee what it was formerly; whatsoever may bee divided is subject to decay and ruine; and whatsoever is indivisible, must also of necessity by reason of the simplicity of its Nature bee Eternal.

Eternity is therefore indivisible, and all those happy persons who have gained that blessed part, are allwaies in possession of their whole being, they lose nothing of what is past, they want nothing of what is future, but the present in that Celestiall Countrey doth comprehend after an unexpressible manner, all those

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three different , and incompatible parts, into which time is divided. And hence it is, that all the happineſſe found there, is true , and ſolid; becauſe thoſe different goods are united in that fixed Manſion , which being heere divided , miſlead the greateſt part of humane kinde in the ſearch they make after the chiefeſt good , and feed us onely with appearances inſtead of truth.

Good is the ſimpleſt of all other beings , and is therefore not to bee looked for heere, where nothing doth ſubſiſt but is compounded ; and all thoſe things which are ſo eagerly purſued by men , for the reſemblance they have to good , are but like glowwormes , which cheat us as wee wander in the night, and caſting forth a luſtre equall to that of the moſt precious Gemmes , are in themſelves naught elſe but rottenneſſe & putrefacti-

we are divided almoſt into as many
as, as perſons, and every one ſeeks
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a severall way, in the variety of their owne appetites, neglecting Eternity, which is the onely place where it resides.

Some hunt after power and soveraign command, expecting to find true contentment in Authority; but alas! how infinitely are they misguided by ambition? the cares of governing, and dangers that accompany a Scepter, so far outweigh the happinesse found in it, that *Augustus Caesar*, who enjoyed the Empire of the world, in the most settled times it ever saw, made it his dayly suite unto the Senate, that he might bee restored unto the quiet of a private life: and *Diocletian* having generously cast off the yoke of ruling others, refused to returne againe unto the glorious servitude, professing that hee found more pleasure among the Cabages growing in his solitary garden, then twenty yeares command over the Roman Empire had yielded to him.

Others there are, whose thoughts are
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wholly taken up in gathering wealth, as if that were the onely thing to bee desired, never considering (so grossly are they blinded by their covetousnesse) that the content of riches consists not in the hoording up of treasures, but in the liberrall distribution of them; that the sordid wayes of gathering money, renders them odious to others, and the restlesse care of keeping it, destroyes the quiet they would establish in themselves; that their continuall negotiation about gaine, hinders them from enjoying the happinesse of life; and that in fine, when they have reaped the plentiful harvest of al their labours, they must resigne it unto others, who longing to enjoy the pretious spoile, thinke their lives tedious, and their deaths welcome. I forbear to mention the infinite number of mischiefes which the possession of riches hath brought upon the owners: how many are there who (like *Seneca*) have in hoording up treasures beene carefull to get together the instruments of their owne ruine? finding
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at last by experience, that to be the occasion of their deaths, wherein they had established the contentment of their lives: this is a truth so evidently certain, that not Philosophers onely and votaries, have beene able to discover the imposture of them, but even whole Nations have agreed upon it. The inhabitants of the Balearicke Islands (now called *Majorca*, & *Minorca*) drowned all their gold and silver in the Ocean; and the Spartans (one of the most flourishing Common-wealths that ever were) banished those mettalls out of the confines of their territories, forbidding the enjoyment of them to all their Citizens; as being incompatible with true contentment.

Some place their happinesse in pleasure, and shunning whatsoever hath the shew of trouble, give themselves wholly up to sensuall delights; fond fooles, who blinded by their bestiall appetites, thinke themselves happy men in practising those actions, which deprive them

of the dignity of being reasonable creatures, and cast them down into the rank of beasts ; unworthy of enjoying soules made after the Divine likenesse , since they imploy their whole time in giving satisfaction to their bodies. And yet how short are those few minutes of contentment which they enjoy , whilest they abandon themselves to their debauches , being compared to those of trouble, which necessarily accompany the pleasures they hunt after ? the drunkard will assure us that the paine hee suffers in his head , and stomacke , is of much longer continuance , then was the tast of that delicious wine wherein hee made a shipwrack of his reason ; the passion whether fained , or reall, which a libidinous man acts , or suffers for a desired beauty, and the solicitous endeavours, used by him for obtaining of his prey , farr outwaigh the momentary pleasure hee enjoyes , which notwithstanding is attended with remorse of conscience from within , and the apprehensions of danger , and dishonour

nour from abroad. Diseases (the effect of their disorders) take up a settled quarter in their bodies, and render that the constant mansion of griefe, and paine, where they intended to have given admittance unto nought but joy, and pleasure; and for a complement of their misfortunes, their vices like a raging fire, consuming all those excellencies which God and Nature have bestowed upon them; brand them with a perpetuall blot of infamy to all posterity, and fixe an everlasting guilt upon their soules.

Sampson had a prodigious strength infinitely surpassing that of other men, seconded by an excesse of courage, which rendred him victorious over Lyons, and triumphant in the discomfiture of an hoast of men; his single person was of more value then an army, but when hee suffered himselfe to bee conducted by his passion, the love of *Dalila* having first blindfolded his reasons eyes, deprived him after of his corporeall fight, betrayd him to his enemies, and reduced

him to so great a height of misery, that to be freed from the contempt to which he was exposed, hee was constrained to employ his matchlesse force, in working his revenge by his owne ruine.

Sardanapalus (last of the Assyrian Monarches) saw himselfe peaceably seiled in the chiefe Empire of the world, but having once given himselfe over to his effeminate pleasures, the fire of lust first kindled in his owne heart, quickly destroyed the respect of him in the mindes of neighbour Princes, and his owne subjects, and after taking hold on the magnificent *Pile* hee had caused to bee erected, reduced to ashes both his person and his Empire.

Alexander (justly surnamed the great, for his unparalleled courage, conduct, and fortune) was mounted to so great a height of glory, that he despised the world, as a place too narrow to bound the limits of his conquests, and yet the murther of his friend *Clitus*, which hee committed in his drunkenness, rendred all these prosperi-
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ties so unfavory to him, that he attempted the killing of himselfe, and begate such an aversion against him in the mindes of divers of his subjects, that they prepared a poyson for him, which cutting short the course of all his victories, buried his triumphs, together with his carcasse in the grave.

Salomon received from God the gift of an incomparable wisdom, above all the men that ever were, and with it a confluence of all those blessings, which might raise humane nature unto the greatest height of happinesse, whereof it is capable during this mortall life; but the inordinate love of women, to which he was addicted in his latter time, deprived his issue of the greater part of his terrestriall kingdome, and himselfe (as some doe probably conjecture) of the Eternall ioyes of heaven.

Why should I farther instance the single punishments of particular voluptuous persons? tis so prodigious a madness for man to place his chiefest good
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in sensuall lust, that it hath drawn down fire from heaven for the consuming of whole Cities, and water from the earth, and firmaments, which was upon the point to have extirpated mankind, all the different Elements conspiring to revenge that insufferable wrong is done to their Creator, when wee neglect his image ingraven in our soules, to satisfie the fleshly part of us, which is nothing else but dust and ashes.

And to conclude, even *Epicurus* the Philosopher, who placed the chiefest good of man in pleasure, did notwithstanding (if we believe *Seneca*, rather then some others who have slandered him) esteeme, that pleasure to consist i'th golden meane of temperance, and not in the exorbitant use of wine, of play, of gluttony, and women.

I have exceeded in handling this particular the brevity I had proposed unto my selfe, because these are the Meteors, which by the glittering brightnesse of their deceitfull light, dazle the eyes of

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our unweary youth, and like so many wandring fires mislead us in our search for happinesse, through the blind paths of ignorance, and folly, untill at last they traine us into the dangerous precipies of wickednesse, and infamy, from whence wee are not able (without particular assistance of the Divine grace) to free our selves, for all Eternity.

All other things so greedily grasped at by worldly men, may be reduced unto the before mentioned heads, of power, of riches, and of pleasure, nobility, fame, and respect, are the attendants upon power, sufficiency, and plenty, waite upon riches, health, strength, and beauty, are necessarily required to the compleating of our pleasures, and therefore what false appearance soever of happinesse, they may hold forth to our deluded mindes, they cannot possibly give us that true content, which is not to be found in these principall things, whereunto they are but acceffories.

Power, riches, pleasure, and the rest,
have

have indeed some resemblance of good , but are not that which they resemble for good ; or happinesse (being the same) consists not in possessing many different things , but in the union of alltogether, whereas they are so farr from being one, that they are inconsistent with each other.

The waight of businesse , and distance kept by Sovereaign Princes, for maintaining the reverence due to their calling, permits them not the sweet delights of pleasure, to which the freedome of equality is requisite , and the vastnesse of their expence, in warrs , in treaties , for intelligence , and other things incident to their Authority makes them the neediest almost of all other men. The wary closenesse of the rich miser , inconsistent with popularity, hinders him from being powerfull, and his daily employment about the encreasing of his store, debarrs him from the use of pleasure, which cannot be had without the expence of time, and money.

The seriousnesse of great
affaires

affaires disturbs the quietnesse of pleasures, and the prodigality of luxury, waists the estates of those that are addicted to it.

In fine, which way soever wee turne our selves, to seeke contentment in satisfaction of our lustfull appetites, these divided goods which cannot dwell together in one subject frustrate our expectations, and enforce us to confesse with the wiseman, that whatsoever hath a subsistence during the continuance of time, is vanity, of vanities, and naught but vanity. For if by a particular indulgence, of God, and Nature, these divided (and as I have already shewed) incompatible blessings, of power, riches, pleasure, respect, nobility, fame, plenty, beauty, health, and strength, should fall to bee the portion of one man; what were all these advantages without security in the injoyment of them, but vanity, and meere vexation of our spirits? and what security can this life possibly afford, amidst the dayly apprehensions of being deprived of them before wee die, and certainty

to lose them, when wee descend into the grave ?

Our blessed Saviour therefore adviseth *Martha* not to divide her thoughts, in the sollicitous quest of many things , since what was necessary was onely one , And that we might not be to seeke, what that one, single , necessary thing should bee , himselte informes us in another place what t'is, when he commands us, to seek first the Kingdome of Heaven by just and righteous actions , which being once obtained, we shall enjoy all other blessings as coessentiall with it.

Is power the object of thy wishes? thou shalt bee there (as the Apostle assures) coheire with him, to whom all power in Heaven and Earth is given. Is honour or command thy chiefest good ? it is so liberally dispensed to all the inhabitants of Eternity, that the Prophet *David* seemes to charge God with prodigallity in that perticular, when he cries out, *Nimis honorati sunt amici tui Deus ; nimis confortatus est principatus eorum ! my God !*
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thy friends are too much honoured, their principallity is too much strengthened, or established. Dost thou desire fame or riches ? behold the same Prophet telleth thee, *Gloria, et divitiæ, in domo Domini*, glory, and riches, are in the house of the Lord. Art thou delighted with the magnificence of royall feasts ? the King of Kings hath by his onely Sonne sent downe from Heaven, invited all mankind to a delicious banquet in his eternall palace, where having seated all the guests that come upon his invitation, according to their severall degrees, himselfe will minister unto them. Is thy heart ravished at the sight of some accomplished beauty ? those who reside in that Eternall mansion, out shine the Sunn in greatest height of all his glory.

In fine, whatever else it is that doth delight thee shall there bee present ; because all thy soules faculties which can find nothing in this inferiour world but is too meane & narrow for them, shall there bee fully satisfied, according to the large extent

extent of all their powers, being absorpt in contemplation of the first truth, and the injoyment of the chiefeſt good; and yet all this ſhall bee, not by the various diverſity of ſeverall objects, but by their bleſſed admiſſion to the preſence of God himſelfe, who being the firſt cauſe, contains eminently the perfection of all other beings, in the ſimplicity of his owne nature, communicating freely all his excellencies to thoſe happy perſons, who are made partakers with him in the infinite, and indiviſible Eternity.

Having conſidered the vaſt diverſity there is between Eternity & time, by reaſon of the infinity of the one, & the ſtrait limits wherein the other is ſhut up, and circumscribed; the entire firmneſſe of the one, and the minute parts whereinto the other is divided; it followes that wee ſhould raiſe our thoughts unto the contemplation of thoſe excellencies, which an Eternall being hath, by the comparing of it unto that which wee enjoy, during the ſucceſſion of time.

Thoſe

Nature of Eternity, &c.

Those who imploy themselves in quest of that, which wee vulgarly call the Philosophers Stone, have not as yet found out the way of fixing *Mercury*, which is the caus they fail in their attempts of making gold, notwithstanding the many laborious, and chargeable experiments; have beene used for the effecting of it; and all that have endeavoured to establish their contentment, in the perishable goods of this inferiour world, have found themselves deluded by their hopes, because they were not able, to fixe the fleeting instants of the present time; whose continuall motion, is of all other things, most destructive unto the happinesse of life.

What an uncomfortable voyage would that man have, who were bound out in quest of some particular wave, i'th middest of the *Atlanticke Ocean*, how improbable that hee should make discovery of what hee sought for? and how impossible to settle there, considering the perpetuall agitation of the waters,

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ters, in that restless Element? And yet such is the fatall blindness which possesseth the greatest part of humane kind, that wee consume our lives in seeking to find out a permanent blisse, amid the various diversity of worldly things; though all our predecessors for above fifty ages past, who have preceded us in that designe, have perished in it, without being able to informe us any thing, save onely this, that they have met with nothing in their severall wandrings but vanity, nor reaped ought but the vexation of their spirits; and that times course (as certain, though not so rapid as that of the Ocean) faileth not to ravish from us all those pleasing objects, in the pursuit of which, wee entertaine our lives; and fancy in the obtaining of them, a contentment, which is no where to be found, but in the happy region of Eternity.

That harmeleffe innocence which is the precious treasure of our Childhood, is violently snatched from us by the heat of youth, that inconsiderately ingageth
us,

us, to seeke contentment in satisfaction of our lustfull appetites; and when the accesse of yeares and judgement at mans estate, hath made us see the vanity of that employment, ambition, pride, and covetousnesse, present us with the specious baits of honour, power, and riches, and traine us by those sweet allurements from contemplation of Eternity, to employ the strength, and vigour of our age in purchase of them, as if they could bestow true happinesse on their possessors; untill at last (if death prevent us not before) wee finde our selves arrived at the utmost period of life, (old age) where though experience discover to us the true nature of those transitory things wee first admired, yet we can reape no other fruit of all her counsels, but only sorrow, and dispaire, when we consider the grosnesse of our errours, and miscarriages for the time past, and the impossibility of amending them in that to come.

And hence it is the royall Prophet *David* takes occasion to reproach man-

kind of dulnesse, and heavinesse of heart, that forsaking the onely necessary thought and study of Eternity, give themselves over unto the love of vanity and the pursuit of lies; *fili hominum usque quo gravi corde; ut quid diligitis vanitatem et queritis mendacium?* as who should say, you sons of men, how long will you permit your hearts and your affections to bee waighed downe by the inordinate sollicitude for earthly things? behold, the pleasures which you love and court for satisfaction of your youth, are onely vanity, and those more sollid employments you search after for the entertainment of your elder yeares, are but a lie; promising contentment, and giving nought but care, vexation, and repentance.

If *Julius Caesar* could have foreseene that all his victories, and triumphs, whereby hee subjected unto himselte the Roman State. (That proud mistnesse of the knowne world) would but have served to make him fall a glorious victim in the Senate house; hee had not prosecuted

cuted certainly with so much ardour as hee did, the cutting off all those, who opposed themselves to the accomplishment of his ambitious designs. King *Pirrhus* had sure followed the counsell of his friend, and betaken himselfe unto the quiet pleasures of a peacefull life, had he beene well informed that all his thoughts of conquests and the enlargement of his Empire, should perish together with himselfe, by the hands of a weake woman, in the attempt hee made to surprise the Citty *Argos*. *Saladine* (that great victorious Sultan of the East) would not have spent his life amid the toile, and dangers that attend a martiall employment, had he but thought at first, as hee did afterwards, at the houre of death, that hee should carry nothing of all the spoiles and riches hee had gotten away with him, but onely a poore shirt to shroud his carkasse.

The rich man in the Gospell would not have joyed in his full barnes, and store houses sufficient for the expence of

many yeares, had hee but knowne that hee should never live to see the birth of the succeeding morne.

In fine, the businesse of the world would cease, and we should looke with horror, and aversion, upon those gilded follies, and pleasing vanities, in quest whereof wee spend our lives, disturbe the Elements, and alter the whole frame of nature, were but their maske pulled off, and wee made sensible of that which is confirmed unto us by the experience of all our predecessors; to wit, that there is nothing in this inferiour world can give a satisfaction to our soule, whose frame is equall unto that of the celestiall spirits; and that although by an excesse of bestiallity, wee could so plunge our soules into the masse of our terrestiall bodies, as to set up our rests upon the enjoyment of those things which are the object of our senses, yet age and sicknesse, would like unbidden guests, trouble the mirth of all our entertainments; and time (the absolute commander of all sub-
lunary

lunary things) consuming by degrees the matter of them, would violently snatch us from their embraces, and put in execution that irrevocable decree pronounced by God against material things, to wit that whatsoever is composed of dust and ashes shall againe returne unto it.

So that if wee examine the true cause of things, wee must conclude, that the ill conduct of our lives, and all the miseries, vices, and disorders, that flow from thence; are an effect of the continuall motion of time, which representing unto us these exteriour objects, under severall disguises, keeps us from penetrating into the true Nature of them, and suggesting to our deluded mindes vaine hopes, and feares, doth by those false alarmes disturb our reason, and brings upon us a forgetfullnesse of what is past, a mistake of what is present, and a grosse negligence, in not providing of our selves for what's to come.

For remedy heereof, antiquity was u-
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sed to set up trophies and monuments of all great, and vertuous actions, as also to expose the bodies of Malefactors who were executed, unto the publicke view on poles, or gibbets, that so posterity being put in minde of what had past, might be invited to imitate the one, and avoid the other. King *Phillip* (Father of the great *Alexander*) gave command unto a Page of his to wake him dayly with this admonition, that hee should call to minde hee was a man, fearing lest hee might otherwise bee transported by the false lustre of his greatnesse, and prosperities, as to mistake (which his Sonn after did) what himselfe was, and forget the condition of humanity, wherein hee had beene placed by God, and Nature. And (the great Doctor of the Church) Saint *Jerome* thinkes it a matter of that consequence for us to imploy our selves in the consideration of what is future, that hee assures us confidently (by warrant of the sacred Scripture) wee should never sin, did wee but carefully rumi-
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nate on the last things that doe attend us. *Memorare novissima tua et in aeternum non peccabis.*

See here the true condition of our being during the succession of time. Let us now alter the Scene and from this theater of confusion, and disorder, raise up our thoughts unto the contemplation of Eternity. It is an instant alwayes present, never decaying, whose infinity comprehends all times past, present, and to come, and whose simplicity presenting us at once with whatsoever can be good or perfect, united in their first cause, whereof (unlesse our sinns debar us from his sight) the Divine Nature wee shall be then made glad beholders; clears up the foggy mists of ignorance, of forgetfullnesse, and of mistake, which hang betweene our understandings and the truth of things; fills all the powers and faculties of our soules with the enjoyment of their desired objects, and doth establish us in the secure possession of our blisse beyond the reach of fortune,
or

or of time which shall not there have power to traverse our contentments with the desire of ought thats past , or the apprehension of ought to come.

When we have once maturely waighed these sollid truths , wee shall begin to loath this prison of our bodies subject to the perpetuall injuries of time , and death , and shall cry out with the Apostle, *Infelix ego homo: quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus* ? unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver mee from this body which belongs to death ? and with the same Apostle , fixing all our affections and thoughts upon Eternity , wee shall continually desire to bee dissolved that we may live with Christ in his Eternall habitation : and when wee shall receive the summons to dislodge hence , brought us by age, diseases, war, famine, pestilence, or any other officer , of time, clad in the hideousest dresse that death can weare ; wee shall with joy prepare our selves unto the journey ; and with the Prophet *David* say , *Laetatus sum in*
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his quæ dicta sunt mihi, in domum domini ibimus. I am rejoyced in that which hath beene said unto me, we will goe into the house of the Lord.

It seemes (being a man according unto Gods owne heart) hee had well studied the Nature of that celestiall mansion , whose quallities, hee doth so excellently describe in the 2 following verses. *Stantes erant pedes nostri, in atriis tuis Jerusalem, Jerusalem quæ edificatur ut civitas, cujus participatio ejus in idipsum.* Our feete were standing in thy Courts Jerusalem. Here they are running, forced to accompany the motion of time, but they shall there be fixed in an Eternal rest, never to bee disturbed by time , or fortune , Jerusalem that is builded as a City ; whole portion consisteth in the thing it selfe. All other places are but Innes , where we are entertained as passengers during our pilgrimage, and therefore have their buildings subject (as are those they harbour) unto decay , and ruine , but this City being the permanent place of our abode.

aboade, hath its foundations laid upon the never fading basis of Eternity. And if you aske, what is the stocke or treasure of the inhabitants in that blessed country? he forthwith tells us that their portion consisteth in the thing it selfe; what is the thing it selfe? but that which is without dependance upon any other; and what is that? but hee who being to declare himselfe unto the Patriarch *Moses*, saith hee is, hee that is, even God himselfe, in whom is comprehended the fulnesse of all things, and without whom is nothing, but the privation of good and happinesse

Let us endeavour then so to comport our selves that wee bee not engaged amid these fading transitory things, but may bee able to say with the Apostle; our life is laid up with Christ in God; and let our onely trafficke, and negotiation, be to hoord up treasures (according to the counsell of our blessed Lord and Saviour) where neither rust, nor mothes, can come to wast them, nor thieves, breake

breake in to steale them from us. Wee neede not be to seeke where that should bee, since hee informeth us that tis in Heaven, the onely proper seat and mansion of Eternity.

In the precedent discourse I have endeavoured to describe (although imperfectly) the Nature and condition of Eternity, which is the true and proper habitation of our soules, who have no commerce with time, but onely by their union with our bodies. A blessed country, but such a one as doth not equally agree with all constitutions, to some it is an Ocean of pleasure, rest, and happiness; to others, an abisse of everlasting horror, trouble, and confusion; the reason of which difference, proceeds from the diversity of those severall dispositions and affections wee carry with us at our parting hence. For the cleare understanding whereof, it is necessary that wee consider the Nature of our Soules, and examine what are those things which subsist in, and together with them, after the

the dissolution of our bodies.

The Heathen Philosophers guided only by the light of nature ; did (some of them) believe the soule of man, to bee immortall, they perceived well that shee was capable of many operations , even in this life , without the mediation of the bodie ; that shee gave a being within her selfe , unto an infinite number of thinges, abstracted from the severall notions of time, place, figure , or any other property incident unto materiall things ; which kinde of being because it sorted not unto the things themselves in their owne Nature , they must necessarily receive from her , and they did thence infer, that shee could not communicate such a being unto them , unlesse shee had an immateriall being in her selfe. They saw the act of judging , was an action purely her own , whereby she produced severall conclusions (which are new beings) out of those premises that present themselves to our imaginations ; and knowing the infallibility of this argument,

ment, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, that of nothing there comes nothing, they were fully satisfied the soule had a being, independant from the body, since it was able to communicate a being unto other things, without the helpe of any Organes which depend upon her.

From the assurance of her being, they collected also her immortallity; for having by the strict observation of all naturall causes, found out that nothing whatsoever could lose its former being, and acquire a new one (which wee terme death in living creatures) but by division, and that, that same could happen but two wayes, *viz.* either by dividing the matter from the forme, or by dividing the matter within it selfe, they inferred thence; that since both these wayes were incompatible with the soule, shee was not capable of a reall change, and consequently not of death (which of all others is the greatest) not the first, because that shee is immateriall, nor the second, because she is a pure forme, and
that

that all formes are by their being so incapable of division, of increase, or diminution, according unto these two Maxims among them, *forma non suscipit majus & minus*, and this other *in indivisibili non fit mutatio*.

Upon the same grounds also they inferred, that all the resolutions, or judgments, and all those Sciences, and Arts, whether speculative, or practicke, which are in the soule during this life, shall remaine also in her after her separation from the body; these being things which depend onely on her, and which are (in a kind) part of her selfe; so as without them she would lose something of the perfection of her being. And to conclude, because they saw nothing among all the workes of Nature, which did not at some time or other, unlesse (t'were hindred by exteriour causes) attaine unto a fulnesse, and maturity whereby it was enabled to reach that end for which it was ordained, and found the reasonable soule alone, which hath for
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the object of her understanding the truth of all naturall causes, and their effects, was not able at any time during this life, wherein shee is united with the body to comprehend the utmost truth may bee discovered in any art, or science whatsoever; they thence inferred, that shee was to enjoy a being after the dissolution of the body, wherein she might at freedom exercise the power of reasoning, wherewith shee is endued, and not onely retain those sciences shee hath acquired heere, but also bee able to conceive all other truth, and knowledge whatsoever, which may bee deduced out of them, by that concatenation and dependance, which the verity of one proposition, hath upon that of another.

I have delivered these speculations of the Philosophers with this brevity, without setting downe the many arguments used by them for prooffe of their assertions, and answer of the objections have beene framed in opposition to them (wherewith whole volumes might bee filled)

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filled) because they have beene since the most part of them confirmed unto us by the tenets of Christian Religion ; the truth whereof (being revealed by God himselfe) is not to bee disputed by mankind, and I have taken this short view of the condition of our soules, onely to this intent, that in the sequell of the ensuing Discourse wee may upon these grounds bee able the better to discover, how farr the ordinary working of naturall causes, doth cooperate with the Divine justice in the reward of vertuous, and the punishment of vicious persons.

For the clear understanding whereof wee must know that all living creatures whatsoever (except man) being destitute of reason, suffer themselves without repugnance to bee directed by the rules of Nature. (That is, the ordinary power used by God in governing the world) which doth sweetly guide them to the performance of those actions, and the obtaining of that end, whereunto they are ordained. But man (whose portion is a
reasonable

reasonable soule) assumes the conduct of himselfe, and blinded by selfe love, or overweaning pride, forsakes the generall end of other things (which is the honour and glory of their Maker) to pursue his owne particular good and follow the inordinate affections of his owne corrupted Nature; the true cause of which mistake is this that followes.

Those who have curiously searched into the composition of man, observe, that he may be considered in a triple capacity, according unto every one of which hee hath a severall good, that hee proposeth unto himselfe, and endeavoureth to attaine unto during this life. The first is, that of a living creature composed of a materiall body, and a forme that doth communicate unto it life and motion. The second as he is indued with a reasonable soule, capable of Discourse, and knowledge, participating thereby of the Nature of intellectuall spirits, which placeth him in a ranke above all the materiall creatures of this inferior world. And

the third, as hee is the workmanship of God created by him out of nothing, after his owne likenesse, that hee might serve him with obedience and perseverance, during his temporall being, and be the witnesse, and pertaker of his glory in Eternity. The chiefeft good of man according to the first, are riches, and corporeall pleasures, called by the Apostle, *Concupiscentia carnis, & oculorum*; Concupiscence of the flesh and eyes.

According to the second the vanity of humane knowledge accompanied with the forgetfulnesse of God; or the ambitious desire of obtaining Power, Honour, and command, called by the same Apostle, *superbia vitæ*, pride of life; those who consider him according to the third capacity, esteeme their chiefeft good to consist in the uniting of their wills with God, and in procuring the advancement of his glorious Name.

Now the vast distance there is betweene these ends which men propose unto themselves, causeth the great d

versity wee see dayly betweene them in the direction and conduct of their lives, each one desiring to obtaine the object of his wishes, by actions suitable unto it. Those of the first rank, abandoning themselves to sensuall lusts forget the dignity of humane Nature: and abase themselves into the ranke of beasts. Those of the second, denying to acknowledge him from whom they have received all those advantages wherein they glory, imitate the Divels in their pride, ungratitude, and rebellion against their maker. Those onely of the third ranke, entring into the true knowledge of themselves, and of the end for which they were created, submit their wills unto Almighty God, and endeavoring to imitate the Angells in their prompt obedience, make themselves during this life, fit to enjoy their society after the dissolution of their bodies.

From the great contrariety of mens judgments, resolutions, and of the actions and habits, that flow from, and are acquired

by them, ariseth the different condition of our soules when they are seperated from our bodies. The Corall we see daily, growes in the Sea, and I have read, that being under water it may (by reason of its softnesse) bee moulded into any shape, or figure whatsoever; but being once exposed unto the open aire, it forthwith hardens, and is no more capable of change, and alteration: the like happeneth unto our soules, who while they do continue in this Sea, o'th' world, are susceptible of the different affections of good, and bad; according to the severall appearances of things, which working on our fancies, incline our wills unto the following, or forsaking of them; but having once finished their voyage heere, must alwayes weare the dresse of those affections they have at parting hence, and reape their harvest in Eternity suitable unto the seeds they have sowed heere; according to that saying of the Apostle; *quæcunque seminaverit homo, eadem & metet*, whatsoever a man hath

hath sowed, the same also he shall reap.

Let us examine the condition of one who hath abandoned himselfe unto his sensuall lusts, and placing his chiefe good in them, hath imploied all the affections and faculties of his Soule, in compassing those objects of his wishes, his stock of time is now exhausted whilest hee endeavoured onely to beguile it with the variety of choise delights; and death finding him busie in the caressing of his body, hath violently snatched it from him. The stately Pallaces, vast Treasures, and ravishing beauties, whereof he thought himselfe the owner, are now in the possession of another, and the poore Soule is exposed naked upon the confines of Eternity. Let us with the eyes of contemplation accompany her thither, and see what are her thoughts, what are her entertainments in that Countrey wherein as yet she is a stranger. This rude alarme hath rous'd her now out of that pleasing slumber, wherein she retchlessly consumed the time allotted her to labour,

and shee is come unto the land of rest , wherein shee must for all Eternity , subsist upon the stocke shee hath brought with her : she now begins to take a view thereof , and summing her accounts, she findes that all her large possessions, sumptuous Buildings, Friends, and Riches, have parted with her at the houre of Death , that all her pleasures are vanished like a Dreame , that her body for whole solace and delight all these were coveted, is mouldring into dust , and ashes ; and that in fine of all that shee hath done ; of all that shee hath seene , suffered , or enjoyed , there remaines nothing with her but her owne inordinate judgements , and affections, which like a raging fire burne her without consuming, whilst all her powers and faculties are racked incessantly , when shee considers the excellencie of what shee hath forgone, the unworthinesse of what she hath pursued , and the impossibility to retract her choice.

All that which a most violent passion
is

is able to produce in the most capable subject, is nothing in comparison of her afflictions. Wee read that *Pompeys* wife (shee who was daughter unto *Julius Caesar*) died suddenly with the excesse of griefe caused by the love shee bare unto her husband, upon the sight but of a bloudy garment; which shee knew had beene that day worne by him; and if we may believe the Poets, that same passion drew *Orpheus* to Hell among the Ghosts, and Fiends in search of his *Euridice*, as being company much more supportable unto him, then were his cares, and sorrowes occasioned by her absence: but alas! what comparison is there betweene the cause of their afflictions? they sorrowed for their seperation from those they loved but for a time, as being well assured, that although time would not restore life to those had lost it: yet hee would certainly unite them to their loves by giving death to those that sought it: whereas Eternity (though infinite and boundlesse) cannot in all the vastnesse, of
its

extension, furnish this soule with the least ray of hope, that she shal meet again with those deceitfull pleasures, wherein she had established her contentment.

The miseries wee suffer during our union with our bodies, have ever with them this double comfort: *viz.* that either they themselves wil change their Nature, or wee change our opinions touching the Nature of them. The course of things wee see is variable, and wee may probably imagine that as our joyes have passed, so also will those things that do afflict us; or else; that the acquaintance wee shall make with misery; will in time so farre alter the Nature thereof, that wee shall bee no longer troubled at it. The strongest Poysons, do in tract of time, become naturall food to those that are accustomed to them; as heeretofore, wee read, it happened unto that King, from whom we have the name and use of Mithridate; whereas the miseries of an Eternall condition, can never receive ease by any alteration, either in the things themselves, or in the mindes of

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of those that suffer them : Because Eternity is nothing else but a fixed instant all-ways permanent ; and time is so essentially necessary unto change , that it cannot bee wrought but by his meanes , according to the before recited Maxime. *In instanti non fit mutatio.*

The torment which *Mazentius* mentioned (by *Virgil* in his *Æniads*) used to his captives, hath some imperfect weak resemblance of this poore soules condition ; that Tyrant used to fasten them unto dead bodies ioyning their hands, their feet, their mouths, their eyes, and all their other parts with those of putrid carcases. Let us consider what were the thoughts of those poor miserable wretches , who though living in themselves were by this union hindred from exercising any the actions of life ; and notwithstanding their natural aversion from stench, from rottenness and from corruption, were yet forced to converse onely with them , exchanging all the happinesse of life , to entertaine those dismall objects , which

which presented them with nought but
ghastlienesse, and terrour.

That unto which those wretches were
compelled by outward violence is an im-
perfect representation of what happens
to this soule by her depraved habits, and
affections, shee hath made choice of bo-
dily delights, and pleasures, as her chie-
fest good; she hath imployed during her
life the faculty of her understanding in
the contemplating, and that of her will
in the enjoyment of them; the often rei-
teration of these acts, and judgements,
have powerfully imprinted them within
her, and being thus disposed her tempo-
rall union with the bodie hath beene dis-
solved; and shees becom a dweller in E-
ternity; where (as I have already shew-
ed) shee is not capable of alteration, shee
very well perceives the base unworthi-
nesse, and vanity of those delights; and
the impossibility of ever comming to en-
joy them, but cannot quit her inclinati-
ons to them, which not permitting her to
exercise her faculties on objects worthy
her

her selfe, fill her with notions of earthly, fading, and corruptible things : whereon (beginning to bee now sensible of her owne naturall perfections) shee cannot cast a thought, but doth replenish her with horreur, with confusion and a-frightment.

The condition of a soule puffed up with pride of humane knowledge, or the ambitious desire of Power, and Command, after her seperation from the bodie, is yet much more deplorable, then that of the other. The failings of the one have proceeded from a grosse ignorance of the true good was to be followed, and from a soft compliance with the bodie; whereas this other hath offended out of malice, and contempt of the first cause, from whom shee hath received her being; the one is to bee looked on as a simple Malefactor, whereas this other cannot be considered but as a Traytor, and a Rebell, who hath attempted to invade the rights of her Creator; and indeavoured to find out a wisdom, and establish

a power which should bee independant of him. Their passions are proportionable unto the causes from whence they spring, so as if the one give her selfe over to the weake passions of griefe, and lamentation, this other falling from the height of her ambitious pretences, must needs abandon her selfe unto despaire & rage, and fury; shee hath beene so far blinded during this life by the opinion of her owne wisdom, and sufficiency, or dazeled with the false lustre of her dignities, and Power, that she refused to stoop to the Divinity, and acknowledge him the onely giver of them: she hath therefore proposed her selfe unto her selfe as the maine end of all her actions, and having thus established a chiefe good opposite unto that of all the other Creatures, and settled in her selfe the notions, and affections thereof, shee hath beene separated from the bodie. When comming to discover the true Nature and cause of things, shee findes that whatsoever hath a being, depends on God, as the first cause,

cause, and are willingly subordinate unto him as the end, for which they were created; that her selfe is like a Prodigie in Nature, whom all the other Creatures exprobrate with this her vile ingratitude, Treason, and Rebellion against their Maker; what can shee doe having thus proudly contemned her God? & being her selfe forsaken and detested by all other things, but seeke out a retirement in her selfe, where her proud thoughts despoyled of that false greatnesse they had fancied; feed her continually with envy, rancour, and dispite, against her fellow Creatures, and the Deity.

Her case (in my opinion) hath some resemblance with that of *Baiazet* King of the Turkes, hee who was overcome and taken Prisoner by the great *Tamerlane*: this proud Prince saw himselfe master of the better part of *Asia*, and having swallowed in his ambitious thoughts the Monarchy of the whole World, had besieged the Grecian Emperour in his Imperiall City which hee was upon the point of

of taking : but in the midst of all his flattering prosperities he was invaded by this *Tamerlane* , who having defeated him in a great battle , caused him to bee shut up within an iron cage , in which being inclosed, he exposed him unto the mockery of all his Army , and used him as a footstoole to tread upon , whensoever he had occasion to get on horsebacke ; what were the thoughts of this proud Tyrant who haveing lately had the disposall of a World of men , and being regarded by them as a Deity ; was suddenly become the scorne of Boies , and Lackies ? and having formerly fancied to himselfe the Empire of the World , was forced to serve another as his footstoole ? All his past greatnesse, Power, and Prosperities, had now no other subsistance , but in his Memory, where they were alwayes present , not to give ease to his afflictions, but to encrease the anguish and the trouble of them , by inspiring him with thoughts of rage , and fury against God and men, by whom his expectations had been

beene so foulely disappointed.

Such we may fancy to our selves are the ravings of this poore soule ; though with this difference , that *Bajazet* was able to avoid the trouble of them , by dashing out his braines against the iorn barres of that his Prison , whereas this soule can never quit her selfe from being persecuted by those stings of conscience she carries with her as her torturers for all Eternity.

Alas ! how imperfect is that apprehension wee have of the acts which a soule exerciseth after her seperation from the bodie ; by comparing them unto those wee are capable of during this life ? hee that should estimate the motion of the *primum mobile* ; according unto what hee sees performed heere by a snaille ; would not fall shorter in his conception of the Rapid swiftness, wherewith that Sphear is whirled about this Globe of Earth , then wee shall doe in ours, if wee resemble the affections of joy , and griete, which wee have heere during the union

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with

with our materiall bodies, to those a soule hath when shee is severed from it; whether we shall consider her huge activity, when she is purely an immateriall substance, in comparison of what shee hath when shee is clogged with flesh and bloud; or the perfection of her operations, when she beholds clearly the things themselves in their owne Natures, without helpe of those *Ideas*, or imperfect representations of them in our fancies, which wee are forced to use during this life: or lastly, the exemption from time, and place, by which our actions heere are all restrained, but can have no commerce at all with her, who is above the reach of time because of her Eternall being; nor can bee circumscribed in place, as having neither quantity nor matter, The affections of joy, and griefe, as they reside in the intellectuall appetite of man, are but impulses of our wills upon our other faculties, which carry us on to the enjoying of the one, or shunning the other, with more, or lesse violence, according

ding to the measure of the impression we receive touching the good, or evil of them; the force whereof depends upon the active motion of the soule, and therein that of one seperated, hugely surpasseth what shee hath heere, while shee is mingled with the masse of our terrestriall bodies; powder whereof wee have the dayly use, when it remains united in the Masse whereof it is composed, is easily restrained by the weake closure of a Tunne, or Barrell; but if it once take fire will cause an Earthquake, and shake the frame of Nature if it bee hindred in its course towards the region of fire, which is the proper center, whereunto it tends. The soul hath some resemblance unto this her passions, or impulses; during her union with the bodie, are weake, and feeble; but being once devided from it, shee then hath an activity surpassing that of fire, which makes her passions or impulses, become so strong and violent, that they bear no proportion at all with those which we have heere, and enjoy nothing

common with them, but their appellation. Their force is also very much encreased, by the cleare sight she hath of things in their own Natures, without the helpe of any Species, drawne from the things, or the conversion of her selfe unto the Phantasmes, from whence ariseth the certainty of knowledge, incompatible with doubt, or with opinion (which are the greatest enemies to action) since no man ever vehemently covets, or feares a thing, of whose Nature hee is uncertain. And, lastly they are beyond measure heightened, by the exemption from time, and place, which shee enjoyes during her state of seperation; whereby shee comprehends (after a sort) all time and place, within her selfe. A little time, and a small place, are capable onely of little alterations, wee are not sensible of the falling of one drop of water, whereas in time it hath the force to pierce the hardest Marble; and the Sunes beames, which being divided into sundry places, have scarce the Power to warme us, doe
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(when they are united, by a glasse) become a fire that burnes and scorceth. What shall wee say then of a passion, which hath Eternity, and an infinity of place for bounds of its continuance, and situation? all degrees of comparison are heere exceeded, and wee must needs acknowledge that all the miseries whereof a man is capable during this life, are a meere nothing, in respect of what these wretched, wretched, soules, are forced to suffer towards the expiation of their crimes, for all Eternity.

What I have heere set downe hath beene to explicate the miserable state of those unhappy soules during Eternity (according to the ordinary course of naturall causes) who deviating from the true good for the enjoyment whereof they were created, have pursued their owne vitious inclinations, and affections, in stead thereof. But who is hee that can bee able to discover the immense greatness of those punishmēts, which the strict justice of an offended Deity, will inflict
F 3 upon

upon them , for their ingratitude against him ? heere all expression is dumb ; and wee must needs acknowledge our hearts are too too narrow to comprehend the vast abisses of his judgements , as well as the overflowing torrents of his mercies. Yet since himselfe hath by his onely Sonne beene pleased to communicate something concerning them unto mankind ; I shall with reverence draw neere ; and without prying curiously into the hidden secrets of them , attempt to take a short imperfect view of the proceedings , which the Divine iustice will order to bee made against these Malefactors for the condigne punishment of their offences.

How deplorable is the condition of these soules according unto what I have described already ? and yet how happy were it in respect of what it is, were they but left alone to bee tormented onely by themselves ? for they have scarce begun to make a sad acquaintance with their miseries, when they are suddenly invironed

ned with a multitude of Divells ; whose ugly shapes cause an affrightment in them equall to that of the imploymēt upon which they come , and that is to convey them unto the dreadfull judgement seat of God. These fiends do now begin to glory in the successe of their temptations, and whilest they drag them to the place where they are to receive the sentence of their condemnation , practise upon them all those barbarous cruelties , which an insulting mercilesse enemy, can use against a Captived wretch delivered over to his rage , and fury. They now have executed their commission, and these poore guilty soules tremble with horrou to see themselves presented before the dreaded majesty of him, whom having formerly rejected for their Advocate and their Redeemer, they must now submit unto , as Judge of all their actions, and deportments ; those rayes of glory which streaming from his sacred person , replenish all the Saints and Angels with unspeakeable content, and

F 4 pleasure,

pleasure, fill them with an excesse of hor-
our, and despaire, by making them re-
flect upon the innocence wherein they
were created, the happinesse for which
they were ordained, the base unworthy-
nesse of that for love whereof they have
cast off the first, and forfeited the latter;
the prodigious ugliness of those affecti-
ons wherewith they now are filled in-
stead of them; and lastly, that all this
must bee proclaimed and justified against
them before the dreadfull Majesty of
God, in presence of the Saints and An-
gells, by their owne consciences, produ-
ced as witnesses against them to their E-
ternall shame and infamy; so that incom-
passed with a Legion of these torturing
thoughts, as well as Divells; they know
not whether of the two hath greater tor-
ment, either the expectation of the sen-
tence, or the Execution of it.

And yet that same is wonderfully ter-
rible, for they are thereby banished from
the presence of Almighty God, and doo-
med to live in Everlasting Fire provided
for

for the Divell and his Angells, from all Eternity. A dismall mansion, whether we shall consider the place it selfe, which is a Region belching out perpetuall flames, and yet covered with an impenetrable darkenesse, or the society of the inhabitants thereof (who are the Divels, implacable enemies of humane kinde) whose malice keepes them perpetually busied in the invention of new torments, whereby to ad unto the greatness of their afflictions; or lastly, their entertainments whilest they abide there, which (as the Sonne of God himselfe informes us) are weeping, & gnashing of their teeth for all Eternity.

I shall not goe about to reckon up the sundry kindes of punishments inflicted there, on severall persons according to the Nature of their severall crimes; the sulphurous potions which the drunkard shall there bee forced to swallow downe instead of the delicious wines, wherein hee placed his greatest happinesse; the loathsome food wherewith the glutton shall

shall there bee crammed, in lieu of his choice feasts, and sumptuous banquets, the scornes, indignities, and contempts, to which the proud ambitious man shall bee exposed, in exchange of that respect, and honour hee sought for heere, and all those different kindes of tortures which the Divine justice, dispenseth with an admirable order, amid that horreur, and confusion, according to the different crimes whereof those soules have heere beene guilty; these have already beene copiously deciphered by other excellent penne, and cannot bee comprisde by mee within the compasse of this short discourse, nor doe I comprehend, how these materiall things may (by the ordinary course of Nature) worke any alteration in the immateriall soule, when she is seperated from the body (for I speake nothing of her condition after the resurrection, when she shall bee againe united to it) but I must needs conclude her torments farr exceed the force of humane understanding to conceive

ceive ; when I consider , the infinite Majesty of that God , for satisfaction of whose justice they are appointed ; the absolute unlimited Power of him by whose order they are inflicted ; the huge activity of a seperated soule by whom they are suffered ; and the endlesse continuance of Eternity , during all which they are to be endured.

We have accompanied these miserable soules unto the brinke of that infernall lake , wherein who ever falles is irrecoverably lost for all Eternity ; unhappy persons, to have at all received a being , since they must there exchange the momentary pleasures they have enjoyd in giving satisfaction to their own unbrideled appetites , to live in everlasting flames , tormented by the Divells , and the sting of their owne consciences , more cruell to them then those hellish monsters , amongst whom they are confined by the Divine justice, for their punishment, and our example.

Let us now alter the Scene , and quitting

ring these sad spectacles of horreur, and affrightment, turne all our thoughts upon the contemplation of a soule, who during life hath proposed God unto her selfe as her chiefe good, and entring into a serious consideration of the unspeakable benefits shee hath received from him, in her creation, in her redemption, and continuall preservation, hath by an act of generous gratitude cast off all thoughts of Lust, of Vanity, or Pride, whereunto she was inclined by her concupiscences, and affections, to sacrifice her selfe intirely unto the performance of his will, and pleasure; the Divine grace seconding these good dispositions, hath so illuminated her with the resplendent beames of Heavenly light, that shee hath beene enabled to discover some little glimps of those admirable perfections of her Creator, the sight whereof hath ravished all her Powers, so that enamored on his Celestiall beauty she hath conversed during her union with the body onely in Heaven, all her thoughts, wishes and affections

fections being continually present there where she had placed her onely treasure. Death, whose grim visage affrights the most couragious spirits, is welcome to her, and she doth quit with joy the base attire of flesh, and of corruption, that she may put on immortallity. Let us a little consider the blessednesse of her condition in this state of seperation.

Knowledge, whose object is the true Nature, and cause of things, is so hard to be attained unto during this life, that the Philosophers (who have imployed themselves in search of it) have a great part of them despaired of being able to find it out. The Academicks (a sect of them much renowned in antient time) pronounced boldly that there was nothing whatsoever, could be knowne; the Scepticks (proceeding something more warily) held that no demonstration could bee made, and did therefore continue doubtfull, denying their assent unto the truth of any proposition. And those Philosophers (who following *Aristotle*

ristotle) have established in our Schooles a forme of learning, doe (by a tyranny they exercise over our reason) command us to admit without proote so many grounds, or principles; upon which they establish the Doctrine they deliver, that divers of our choicest modern wits, have thence taken occasion to dispute against them, and to endeavour the overthrowing of all that structure they have built upon them.

This inextricable laberinth wherein truth is shut up, being impervious by mortall men, caused *Socrates* after all his study in search of her, conclude, that hee was ignorant of all things else save onely this, that hee knew nothing, and the despaire of being able to find her out, made *Aristotle* throw himselfe headlong into the Ocean, after hee had long sought in vaine to find the reason of its Ebbs and flowings.

But she who doth so carefully conceale her selfe from those that live, exposeth freely all her beauties to bee viewed over
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by this separated soule, and fills her with the fulnesse of that knowlege in one instant, whose smallest portion wee scarcely gaine by the continuall study of many ages; the contemplation whereof is a contentment infinitely surpassing all those pleasures which wee are capable of during this life. The Queene of *Sheba*, upon the fame onely of *Salomons* great wisdom, thought it well worth her labour to quit the pleasures of her Court, and exposing her selfe unto the trouble, toile, and dangers incident to a long voyage, came from the farthest part of all the East to finde him out, that she might have the satisfaction to become a hearer of it. *Alexander* the great, prized at so high a rate those notions of Philosophy he had received from *Aristotle* during the time he was his Pupill, that he was used to say, hee had a greater obligation to his Tutor then to his Father *Phillip*, and yet he had from him received his being, & power, sufficient to make himsele the wonder of succeeding ages, by reason of his glorious

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ous victories, and conquests: and *Archimedes* (the great Artist) had all his powers, and faculties, so wholly taken up, by the contentment hee found in speculating of those demonstrations he had invented touching the Symetry and proportion of bodies, that all the rage, and fury, was practised, at the taking in of *Siracusa*, & the destruction of these innocent inhabitants, which peopled that unlucky City (whereof himselfe was one) could not divert him from the pleasure of it, or once afford him leasure to make answer unto a Souldier, who asked his name, with an intention to have preserved him.

If this small dawne of knowledge hath appeared unto the eyes of the beholders with so glorious a luster, as made it preferable before the sumptuous magnificences of a splendid Court, the glittering brightnesse of a Crowne, and Scepter, or life it selfe, what shall we say of that excessive of pleasure wherewith this soule is filled, when shee enjoyes the fullnesse of all knowledge, and clearly sees the causes

ses, Nature, properties, and qualities, of all the workmanships of God? when she beholds his admirable Wisdome, Power, and Providence, exercised in the continuall upholding of this huge fabrick? and how from the great contrariety and strife there is betwene the parts whereof it is composed, he drawes the preservation of the whole, by a perpetuall Series of generation, and corruption: how death which seemes to bee ordained for destroying the society of humane kinde, is the maine Basis whereupon it restes; because the feare thereof witholds vicious persons from falling headlong into the depth of wickednesse, and the hope of it animates vertuous men to persist constantly, in the rough craggy wayes of good, and vertue. Those rare effects of Nature that puzzle all our choicest wits in searching out their hidden causes, are then made easie to her, and shee doth plainly understand, whether the fluxes and refluxes of the Ocean, are guided by the motion of the Moone, or the impulse

Of that continuall winde, raised under the Equator by the Sunne, whether that constant inclination of the Loadstone towards the North, whereby wee are enabled to make discoveries of the remotest creekes and corners of the Sea, is caused by an attractive quallity residing in the poles of the earth, which being somewhat different from those wee fancy in the Heavens, produceth that small variation we observe dayly in the Compasse, or by those streames of atomes, drawne by the Sunnes great heate betweene the Tropickes, which flowing ever more from North to South, and penetrating all the subtile pores, whereof the stone is full while it remaines within the Earth in that position, doth in continuance of time beger this property, which wee can imitate by often heating of an iron, and placing it to coole (while yet the pores thereof are opened by the fire) due North, and South. Or lastly, whether that quallity, together with the power whereby the same is by a touch communicated

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nicated to the needle, and that whereby it attracts iron to it selfe, depend on causes whereof as yet mankind is ignorant, whose knowledge is by providence reserved to the discovery of posterity in that age which shall succede us, as the experience was to those in that which went before us. Whether the cherefull light, which wee see darted by the Sunne from East, to West, is but a quality communicated by him in an instant to all the aire, throughout the vast extent of our horison, or is the body of the fire it selfe, which being the most active Element, and flowing from the Sunne, as from its fountaine; into the liquid Element of aire, prevents by its vast distance from us, huge expansion, and active swiftnesse, our feeling, and our sight, from being sensible of any thing which might informe our understanding, touching the measure of its heat and motion. Whether the never ceasing turnes we have of day, and night, proceed from the perpetuall motion of all the Heavens, carried

about by the great violence of the *primū mobile*, or from the motion of the Earth on its owne Axis, exposing all the severall partes of it successively, to be enlightened by the Sunne; Whether the Planets are fixed; each of them in a severall Spheare, whose motion doth direct their courses; or (which some think they can demonstrate of the Sunne) moove all of them (except the moone) upon their severall Axes like the Earth. How far their different influences, and aspects, governe all sublunary bodies, causing the birthes and periods, of States, and Monarchies, and the perticular happinesse and miseries of private men.

But above all shee is intirely satisfied with seeing, how the intalibillity of Gods prescience, infringeth not the liberty of mans free will. How nothing heere below, happens by chance, but that his providence disposing sweetly all those things which he hath wrought, permits the miseries of good, and prosperities of wicked men for the advantage of his service;
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by exercising and instructing of the one, and by reclaiming of the other, and how in fine by the inscrutable Meanders of his judgements hee ordereth so, that all the villany, and wickednesse is practised heere, cooperates unto the good of his Elect, and the increase of his owne glory.

In these employments she might with joy spend an infinity of time, were shee not taken off by others of much more delight, and consequence. For shee no sooner leaves times region and comes upon the confines of Eternity, but shee attended by a troope of Angels, appointed to convoy her unto the glorious Court of her Creator, and shee receives by them an invitation is sent unto her by God himselfe, like unto that wee read of in the Canticles. *Jam hiems transit imber abiit, & recessit sive amica mea & veni.* My friend the winter of thy chilling cares, and feares, is past, the showers of all thy teares are now blowne over, arise therefore and mount up unto the e-

ver blessed dwelling of Eternity. Who can expresse those extasies of joy this summons causeth? or fancy to himselfe the least Idea of those pleasing raptures wherewith she is possessed, when she beholds the beauties of the imperiall Heaven, which now stands open to receive her?

Those holy Saints and pious men, who have endeavoured to inflame us with the love of vertue by hope of the reward to come; accommodating their expressions to our conceits, describe it to us like a spacious Citty, built all of Gold and precious stones, whose gates are each of them composed of one entire Pearle, whose walles are made not for defence but ornament, because her enemies are all destroyed, and shee established in security, above the reach of time or fortune; whose houses are of Jasper, and of Porphyrie, inlaid with Rubies, Diamonds, and Carbuncles, where Gold and polished Marble, are not employed but for the meanest uses. Every of whose inhabitants is a great

great King, and hath Dominion over all the workes of Nature, a beauty that our shines the Sun in greatest height of all his glory, an activity surpassing that of lightning, accompanied with youth, and health, which never shall decay for all Eternity. Within the circuit of those walles, they represent unto us a large field, beautified with all the choise variety of flowers that can bee thought on, whose fragrant smell sends forth a most delicious perfume to the senses; in midst whereof passeth a purling streame of living waters, which who so tastes, shall never thirst for all Eternity: where a continuall spring preserves all plants, in the full freshnesse of their prime and verdure, where an Eternall day suffers not the least Eclips of night, or darkenesse, there all the blessed dwellers in this Heavenly Country doe entertaine each other in perfect love, and concord, with fulness of all joyes, and pleasures, whose compleate happinesse can never be disturbed, by the unwe!come presence of an ene-

my, or the sad parting of a friend.

What a meere nothing, are all the flattering shadowes of content we graspe at during life, being compared to those of this Celestiall mansion, which I have heere described: yet these are the outside onely of their joyes, not to bee prized at all, if once compared to that wherein consists the Essence, of their perfect blis, and happinesse. Gold, Marble, precious stones, faire fields, coole springs, the company of Saints and Angells, Sovereaigne power, beauty, activity, youth, health, impassibility, and immortallity it selfe can never satisfie the immateriall soule, without the vision of her Lord and maker, this is the center whereunto shee tendes, the object of her powers, and faculties; this being once obtained, brings with it full repose, and quiernesse, which all created things can never doe. And this is heere communicated freely to her, whereby her understanding is fully satisfied, with the cleare knowledge of all thinges, by sight of him who is both the first

first cause, and truth it selfe. Her will finds also heere what ever object it desireth, in the secure possession of all good thinges, which are united in his Nature who is good it selfe.

Who can describe the infinite advantages, prerogatives, and dignities, that doe accompany this blessed vision? words are too feeble to expresse, and humane hearts (though nere so large) are too too narrow to conceive them.

Let us conclude; that as that man who doth partake of wisdom is truly wise, and who hath courage becommeth valiant, even so this blessed soule, being ingulf'd in contemplation of the diety, by the strict union which that causeth of all her faculties to him, is in some sort a God, enjoying all perfections by participation, which God himselfe hath by propriety.

The Conclusion.

Reader having finished these two first heads of this Discourse, to wit, a description of what Eternity is, and what our condition

condition will be when we shall come to be partakers of it ; there remained in the last place, that I should according to my promise , have set downe such rules for the conduct of our lives, whilst wee are heere, as might (being observed) render us perfectly happy when we should come to be inhabitants in that our country.

These rules I meant should have comprised within them all the vertues, which may bee well reduced into two heads ; that is to say, those which have for their object the Divinity it selfe, and those that serve for the well ordering, and disposing of our actions.

The principall ones of the first kinde, are those wee call the Theologicall vertues, Faith, Hope, and Charity, whereof, the first breeds in us a perfect resignation of our understandings unto God, by assenting with humillity and constancy, without doubt, or hesitation, unto those truths which hee hath pleased to reveale to us for the salvation of our soules : the second makes us with patience and perseverance,

severance, continue in the way of vertue; expecting to bee made partakers of all those blessings hee hath promised to his servants; and the third causeth, an entire union of our will with his, which is the greatest heighth of Christian perfection, and the assured meanes to attaine unto an everlasting blisse.

Among those of the second kinde (being the morall vertues) the chiefeest are, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance, (commonly called the Cardinall Vertues) which serve for the well ordering and disposing of all the faculties, passions, and affections, of our Soules. Prudence, which ought to preside in all the consultations of our understanding; Justice, to governe all the resolutions of our will; Fortitude, to keepe in due subjection the passions comprised under the generall notion of the irascible part of man; and Temperance, to bridle the exorbitancie of our concupiscences, and affections.

I had intended to have described at
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largethe Nature, and the qualities, of all these vertues, and to have shewed, how all the other may be deduced out of these seven, by reason of the connexion, and relation they have unto each other; and I had meant, in the contexture of that Discourse, to have set downe the way, and meanes, to purge our Soules from all the depraved inclinations, and habits, which are opposite unto them, that being thereby cleansed, from all the rust and filth of sin, they might become capable subjects of being illuminated by the Divine grace, and bee enabled to discover his admirable goodnesse, and perfections, whereon being enamoured, they might by fervent acts of charity unite their wills entirely unto his, and thereby mount unto the top of Christian perfection, which is the assured meanes of being happy in Eternity.

I say I had intended, for (although I had spent some time in the digesting, and ording of this matter) yet I was put unto a stand in that designe, by a reflexion which

which I chanced to make upon a saying of that glorious Saint, and Doctor in the Church of God, Saint Cyprian, who writing unto some of the *Ethnicks*, touching the lives and studies of the Christians (speakes thus, *Philosophi factis non verbis sumus, nec magna loquimur, sed vivimus*, that is, wee are Philosophers in our actions, not in our wordes, nor do we speake great things but practise them. It seemes this holy man thought it much fitter for a Christian, to exercise himselfe in vertuous actions then in describing the Nature of the vertues.

Now this opinion of so grave and reverend a Father of the Church, having at first caused mee to doubt, whether I should proceed to perfecting the worke I had in hand; I tooke a resolution sometime after to give it over, upon the reading of a passage, reported by some writers in the life of *Origen*, (that prodigy of wit and learning) they set downe that being in his old Age sensible of divers errors he had runne into (which made his
followers

followers be condemned as Hereticks) he came into the Church with an intention to expound some passage out of the Scripture, for the instruction of the people; and to that purpose opening the booke, hee chanced to light upon a passage in the Psalmes of David, wherein the holy Prophet speaking of God, saith thus, *Peccatori dixit, quare tu enarras gloriam meam, & assumis testamentum meum, in os tuum.* In English thus, He (meaning God) said unto the sinner, wherefore dost thou shew forth my glory and dost assume my testament into thy mouth. The penitent old man, taking this reproofe as spoken to himselfe, burst forth into a flood of teares, which tooke from him the use of speech, and retiring out of the Church, abandoned all the thoughts of teaching others, that he might spend the short remainder of his life in the reforming of himselfe.

The reasons which prevailed with this great Doctor, have wrought the same effect with mee, and I resolved to quit the farther

farther busying of my selfe in an imployment, wherein I was forbidden to meddle by reason of my sinnes; and which I was unable to performe, because I am a stranger to the practise of those vertues I should write of, and so might justly feare that inconvenience would thereby happen, whereof wee are forewarned by our Blessed Saviour in the Gospell, to wit, that if the blind shall lead the blind, they both will fall together in the pit.

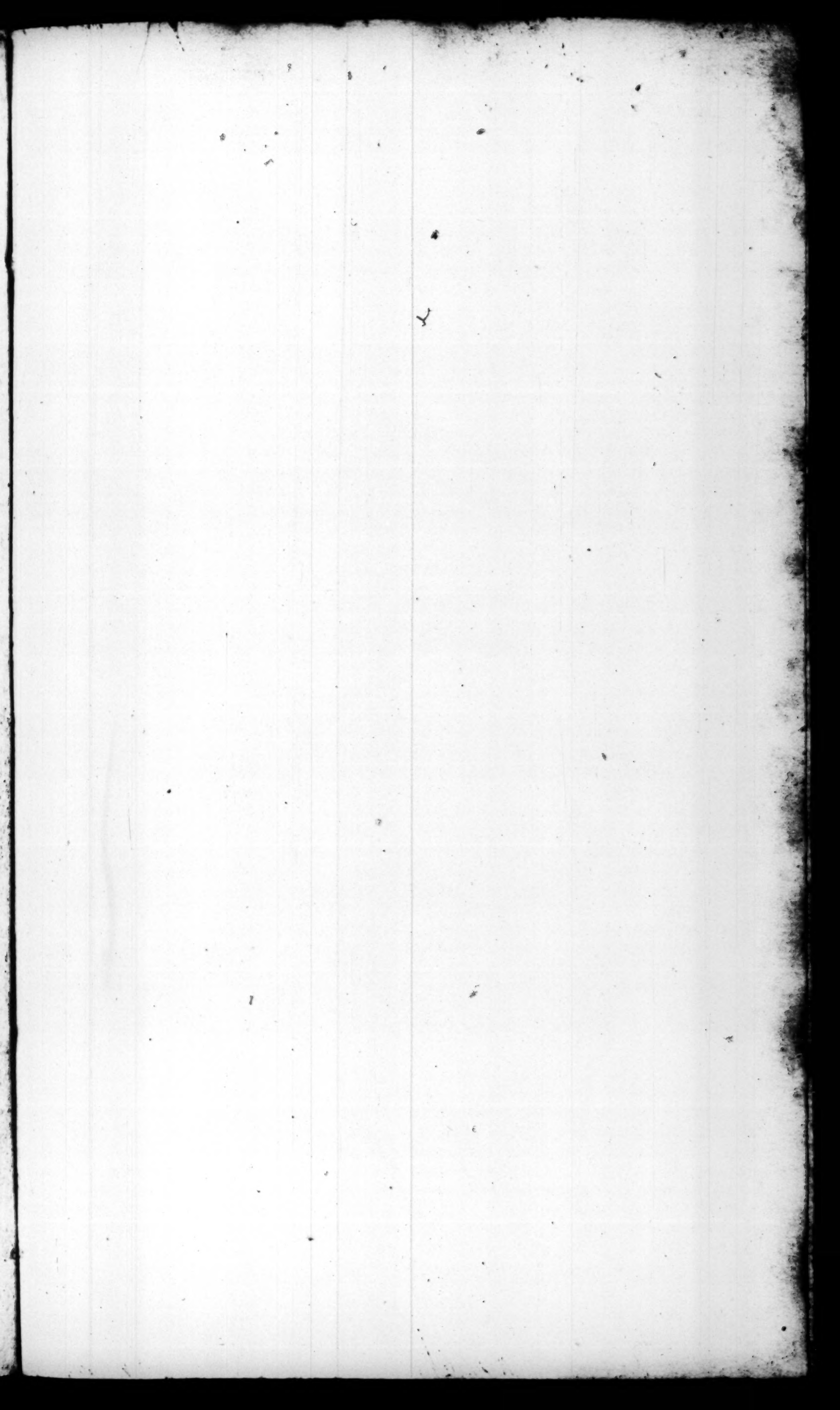
Heere therefore I give end to this Discourse, with this advertisment onely unto the pious Reader, that if he shall desire to have his heart enflamed with the Divine love, he must first necessarily cleanse it from all affections unto fading, and transitory things. *Suetonius* in the lives of the twelve first *Cæsars*, relates, that when the body of the Emperour *Titus* was placed in the Funerall pile, to be consumed with fire (according to the custome of those times) his heart (after his body was reduced into ashes) did many times spring

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out of the flames, and being at last opened by those who wondred at the strangenesse of the accident, it was found to bee full of poyson; which hindred the operation of the fire upon it. Even so our Soules, while they continue fraught with the inordinate love of earthly things (which are the mortall poison of the Soule) resist the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and suffer not themselves to be inflamed by the Celestiall fire of charity, which he doth never faile to kindle in those hearts are fitted to receive it.

The readiest way for the devout Reader to effect this, is wholly to imploy his thoughts, and studies, in the continuall meditation upon Eternity, wherein if he be farthered by any thing which I have heere set downe, I then desire, that as I have made him partaker of my meditations, so hee would also make mee partaker with him in his Prayers.

FINIS.



out of the flames, and being at last opened by those who wondred at the strangenesse of the accident, it was found to bee full of poyson; which hindred the operation of the fire upon it. Even so our Soules, while they continue fraught with the inordinate love of earthly things (which are the mortall poison of the soule) resist the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and suffer not themselves to be inflamed by the Celestiall fire of charity, which he doth never faile to kindle in those hearts are fitted to receive it.

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